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Introduction

Gary L. McIntosh, Editor

Just shortly after the annual meeting of the American Society for Church Growth held in Orlando, Florida last November, *USA Today* published a major article noting that churches in other countries are now sending missionaries to the United States. While this is old news to most of us in the Church Growth Movement, it was noteworthy that the article revealed where most of these new missionaries are going—the inner cities. Reaching cities for Christ is clearly a strategic target for advancing the Kingdom of God in the coming years.

Two lectures from the 1997 annual meeting of the ASCG are published in this issue. Dr. Jack Dennison's article "*City-Reaching: The Dominant Church Paradigm of the Next Decade*" clearly presents the crucial need to reach cities for Christ in the 21st Century. Dr. Eddie Gibbs follows with an "*Introduction to Urban Strategies*." Other lectures from the 1997 meetings will be published later this year.

Building networks of partnerships for effective ministry in the 21st Century is often discussed within the context of denominations. Moving in a different direction, Dr. Paul Thyren focuses our attention on independent churches and how they can build relational networks in the years to come. His two articles "*The Biblical Basis for Relational Networking Among Autonomous Churches*" and "*Networking Theory and Its Application to Autonomous Churches*" present many insights and principles we can all use wherever we serve.

Among the many barriers to church growth is an unforgiv-

ing spirit in the congregation. Jerry Graham's article on "*Forgiveness: The Key To Spiritual Warfare*" completes this issue of the journal in fine fashion. His article is not a rehash of teaching on forgiveness but rather a revealing look at how forgiveness and spiritual warfare are related.

Articles for future issues of the *Journal of the American Society of Church Growth* are always needed. All submitted articles should reflect a slant toward some issue of interest to church growth and those ministering with the Church Growth Movement. See the *Information for Writers* at the end of this issue for complete information.

— Editor